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30 JUL 1981

MEMORANDUM FOR: Federal Women's Program Manager

VIA: Deputy Director for Administration  
Director, Equal Employment Opportunity

FROM:   
Director of Training and Education

SUBJECT: A Proposed Training Course, Women and Leadership

REFERENCE: Memorandum to DTE from FWPM, dated 16 July 1981, same subject

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1. The Office of Training and Education has considered the proposal for a course entitled Women and Leadership. While the proposal makes many salient points, it is felt that training programs currently offered and under development in OTE, along with support for external training requests, substantially address the needs you identified. In addition, the development of a course with these objectives causes this Office some concern relative to a balanced and equitable management training program. Outlined in the following paragraphs are the reasons for our reluctance to support this proposal.

2. The following Agency training efforts are designed to address many of the concerns you cited:

a. The newly-developed Human Relations and Management (HR&M) Course, jointly conducted by OTE and OEEH, has as two of its objectives:

(1) Identify, understand, and critically assess self-perceptions and the perceptions of those who are culturally different as a vital factor in the effective and equitable management of the Agency's human resources.

(2) Understand the influence of cultural differences and attitudes on interpersonal and managerial relationships and efficiency.

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HR&M has been well received by four groups of Agency managers, including a number of women. It has been perceived as accomplishing its objectives by these students.

b. All Management and Administrative Training courses are open to eligible employees on an equal opportunity basis. Our experience, based on feedback from students, suggests that they have profited by the courses being composed of a mix of individuals.

c. On a case-by-case basis, a number of women managers have been sponsored financially to attend external courses designed for women managers.

3. Concerns generated by this proposal primarily involve the implications of a course designed for a unique sub-group of the Agency population. Of major significance are the following issues:

a. A course designed strictly for women removes the opportunity for comparing and contrasting a wide variety of issues, including differing personalities, managerial styles, and decisionmaking strategies. The opportunity to explore these differences is a key factor in the success and utility of currently conducted management courses, and is a specific objective of the HR&M course.

b. OTE feels it is essential to the development of effective Agency managers that students have the opportunity to see, hear, and experience the same information and training. A separate course for women would, at best, detract from that objective.

c. A separate course for women appears discriminatory in that it would allow for developmental opportunities denied a large segment of the Agency population.

d. The course critiques of a number of women who have attended similar courses outside the Agency, have been reviewed. Several of these students felt that internal courses better prepared women to assume managerial positions and that the absence of men did not allow for a balanced perspective.

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4. The outcomes you wish to achieve as outlined in the proposal are laudable. In reaching our decision, OTE sampled the views of several managers and instructors, including women. While developing a separate course does not appear appropriate at this time, additional segments in currently-conducted programs may offer opportunities to further explore this important organizational issue. OTE is now in the process of developing or redesigning several courses. Where this subject can be addressed, it is hoped we can call upon your staff to aid in curriculum design.



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